Digital progress in local government
Checklist for elected members

ACCOUNTSCOMMISSION ✓

Transforming public services and building a digital council is difficult and takes time. Each council has started from a different position depending on its available resources (money and people) and the state of its existing systems and culture, and the demographics of the council area. These factors will also determine how quickly a council can transform.

This checklist is intended to help elected members scrutinise and challenge digital progress. It supplements the *good practice guide* and sets out a number of questions to be considered and asked of officers, based on the characteristics of a digital council from our *Digital progress in local government* report.

The *Principles for a digital future* (2017) complements this and provides further detail.

Questions for elected members to consider			
Progress			
1. Do I understand what a digital council looks like?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
2. Do we know what progress we are making in becoming a digital council?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
3. Do we know the impact covid-19 has had on our digital transformation plans, and are we capturing lessons learned from our response to aid our recovery?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
			Cont.

Questions for elected members to consider			
Digital leadership			
4. Do we have a digital strategy that is focused on transforming services and that is aligned to wider council priorities to improve outcomes for citizens and communities?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
5. Do we have underlying plans to deliver our digital strategy with clear actions, timescales and resource requirements?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
6. Are we effectively engaging with staff to develop our digital plans; communicate what this will mean for them; and to create a collaborative culture and mindset?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
7. Do we (as elected members) have the skills and knowledge to champion the benefits of digital transformation and scrutinise progress? Is sufficient support and training available?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
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Questions for elected members to consider			
8. Do we have governance arrangements that provide central oversight of digital transformation and are these regularly reviewed to ensure the right level of scrutiny and timely decision-making?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
9. Have we considered what level of investment will be required in IT infrastructure (hardware, software and cloud services), council staff, and digital leadership to become a digital council?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
10. Are the views and needs of citizens and communities considered in our digital transformation projects and are users involved in a meaningful way?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
11. Do our digital transformation plans clearly set out how we will deliver better outcomes for users and how this will be measured?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
			Cont.

Questions for elected members to consider			
12. Do we understand how digital exclusion is affecting our citizens and communities and do we have a strategy in place to address this?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed

Digital workforce			
13. Do our workforce plans align with our digital strategy and do they reflect the impact that digital transformation will have on our workforce both now and in the future?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
14. Do we know what digital skills we need at a leadership level and across the wider workforce to deliver our digital plans? Do we have effective plans in place to build digital skills and capacity to fill any gaps?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed

Collaborative			
15. Are we supporting collaboration and joint working across the council? Are arrangements in place for staff to share lessons learned, ideas and digital solutions?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed

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Questions for elected members to consider			
16. Are we engaging with other councils, the Digital Office and Scotland Excel to identify the areas and services where common platforms and joint procurement would add most value?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
17. Are we actively participating in the Digital Office community and other regional partnerships to learn and increase capacity to deliver digital change?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed

Technology and data enabled			
18. Do we have the right technology and systems in place so that we can build and reuse common solutions and use and share data in a secure and ethical way?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed
19. Are we developing a data strategy and do we understand what IT systems and skills are needed to make better use of data?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed

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Questions for elected members to consider			
20. Do we have a data governance framework in place that considers data standards, data ethics and cyber security?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed

Innovative			
21. Are we promoting an innovative culture that gives staff the space and time to explore new solutions, and permission to take managed risks to try working differently?	Yes – working well	Yes – improvement required	No – action needed

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